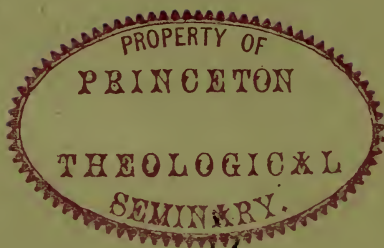


BS2650  
.8.H86





Division BS 265D

Section 8. H 86

No. 1000 1000 1000 10



















# EVIDENTIAL CONCLUSIONS

FROM THE FOUR GREATER EPISTLES

OF

## ST. PAUL.

BY THE

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY:

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND

164, PICCADILLY.

## Argument of the Tract.

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THE concession of Baur, Renan, and others, respecting the authenticity of these four Epistles taken as the starting-point of the argument. Nothing is assumed regarding the authority of other parts of the New Testament.

I. In these four Epistles we have CHRISTIANITY AS A SYSTEM, including facts, doctrines, and institutions; (1) *Facts*: the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ; importance of noting the manner in which these two subjects are mentioned; (2) *Doctrines*: the conspicuous position assigned to faith; the doctrine of redemption; instruction regarding the Holy Ghost. (3) *Institutions*: Baptism; the Supper of the Lord; the Christian Ministry; the observance of Sunday. All this tends to bind naturally together these Epistles with the rest of the New Testament. (4) A similar conclusion drawn from the mention of *Persons*: St. Peter in these Epistles and in other parts of Scripture; value of the general confidence inspired by the Christianity of these Four Epistles.

II. In these Epistles we have ST. PAUL'S PERSONALITY. Strong characteristics of his personality here and in other parts of the New Testament. (1) Claim of an *independent and direct call to the apostleship*. This is consistent with what we read elsewhere. (2) His own testimony here to his former *persecution of the Christians*. (3) Unity of St. Paul's character; his *unwearied* energy. (4) His *quick sympathy and tact*; varied illustrations of this feature. Thus again these four accepted Epistles are seen bound by a strong chain with St. Paul's other Epistles, and with the Acts of the Apostles.

III. MINUTE, YET INDEPENDENT, HARMONY OF THESE EPISTLES WITH DETAILS IN THE BOOK OF THE ACTS. (1) St. Paul's habit of *working with his own hands*. This fact appears both in these letters and elsewhere; moral lessons drawn here and elsewhere from this habit. (2) Notices of *Aquila and Priscilla*; these notices are consistent everywhere, yet without any suspicion of contrivance. (3) The *collection for the poor Christians in Judæa*; illustration thus furnished of St. Paul's habit of philanthropy. (4) Evidence supplied by the mention of *places*; example, in that of *Damascus*, as named in two of these Epistles; strict harmony of this with what we find in two of St. Paul's speeches. This kind of argument would tell forcibly in a court of justice. It does not put in jeopardy any other part of Christian Evidence.

# EVIDENTIAL CONCLUSIONS

## FROM THE FOUR GREATER EPISTLES

OF

## ST. PAUL.



IN the wide waste of waters which modern criticism believes itself to have spread over the firm and fruitful ground of Divine Revelation there stands an island, the solid foundation and clear surface of which are not questioned. This is the portion of the New Testament which consists of the Epistles written to *the Corinthians, the Galatians, and the Romans*. These documents are viewed by the most advanced of the critics as authentic, and as having been really written by St. Paul in the course of his third missionary journey. The words of M. Renan may be taken as sufficing to justify the assertion of this fact. He speaks of these four Epistles as “*incontestables et incontestées*” (indisputable and undisputed); and he adds, “*les critiques les plus sévères, tels que Christien Baur, les acceptent sans objection.*”<sup>1</sup> (The most severe critics, such as Christian Baur, accept them without

The four  
Epistles un-  
questioned  
by criticism.

Renan's  
testimony.

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Paul*, pp. v., vi.

objection.) It is from this concession, as its starting-point, that the following short course of reasoning proceeds.

The purpose  
of this  
Tract.

I propose, in these few pages, simply to take this conceded fact, coupling it with another fact which cannot be denied—namely, that a Book called the Acts of the Apostles exists, as well as the four Gospels and the other Epistles—and to suggest some conclusions which seem to me to be easily and naturally reached from this point of departure. I take into my hand these four unquestioned Epistles, and I place beside them the Book of the Acts, without assuming anything as to its date or the circumstances of its first appearance. I shall merely submit certain parts of it to critical internal examination as I proceed. So with other parts of the New Testament, the Gospels and the remainder of the Epistles. They, to some extent, will be dealt with in the same manner. But, as will be seen, there are special reasons, in this case, for careful attention to the Acts of the Apostles.

## I.

Christianity  
as a system  
found in the  
undisputed  
Epistles.

Now, in the first place, we have in these four Epistles *Christianity as a system*. If all the rest of the New Testament were vanished and gone, still we should have this fact to deal with; and it is a difficult fact to deal with, except on the sup-

position that Christianity is a revelation from Heaven.

Can only be accounted for as a Divine revelation.

The best way to justify this statement is to read through the four Epistles under consideration, with this thought in the mind; and this I have done, so as to have the case fresh and correct before me. I have tried to feel as if it were a new subject. It is not a bad exercise, even for a firmly-believing Christian. To one who does not believe, this simple task may be recommended as worthy of an experiment.

In speaking of Christianity as a system I include, of course, facts, doctrines, and institutions; and these three sides of the subject may be taken in turn. It may not be easy to draw lines of absolute separation among them. Christian doctrines are implied in Christian institutions; and there must be ascertained facts to give value to both. But for the purposes of the present argument it is enough to draw the distinction approximately; and we may consider facts, doctrines, and institutions separately.

What is included in Christianity as a system.

1. As to *facts* implied in these Epistles there is no doubt that they point, in the most remarkable manner, to JESUS CHRIST, and centre there. Such a person as JESUS CHRIST must have existed; and within very near limits of time before the writing of these letters: and if we have an account of Him which seems to fit all the references to Him con-

The facts implied in these Epistles.

tained in these documents, such an account at least demands an instant and most careful attention. The letters are so remarkable and surprising, that the interest they excite immediately communicates an interest to what seems to be collateral and explanatory. They require an evangelical background; and the evangelical background which we possess exactly meets the case. Why is it not to be accepted?

Among minor facts, the following are worthy of attention. In the Epistle to the Romans it is said that Jesus Christ was "made of the seed of David."<sup>1</sup> This is a fact upon which some considerable stress is laid in the Gospels, as also in the Acts.<sup>2</sup> In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians it is said that He was "poor";<sup>3</sup> and this fact too is very prominent in the Evangelic history.<sup>4</sup> Nor is it credible that these representations of Christ in that history—that He was a descendant of David, and that He lived a life of poverty—can have been introduced there, in the midst of a tissue of varied incidents, in order to produce a correspondence with the four documents before us. The mention of the reading of the Mosaic Scriptures in the synagogues, which we find in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians,<sup>5</sup> is

The Davidic  
origin of  
Christ.

His poverty.

The reading  
of Moses  
in the  
synagogue.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 3; John vii. 42; Acts ii. 30; xiii. 23. See 2 Tim. ii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. viii. 20.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 15.



not without its value for this argument, when we compare it with the actual notices of such reading of the Old Testament, in the lives of Jesus and His Apostles,<sup>1</sup> and with what James is recorded to have said at the Apostolic Council: "Moses hath of old time them that preach Him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath day."<sup>2</sup> This very person James might be used as a link of connection incidentally (and therefore persuasively) furnished between the Epistle to the Galatians on the one side, and the Gospels and Acts on the other. In the Epistle he appears in companionship with Peter and John, as a "pillar" of the Church conjointly with them;<sup>3</sup> and the Gospels place him with them in the catalogue of chosen Apostles.<sup>4</sup> This scene too is at Jerusalem, the place where the Acts represent him as occupying a prominent local responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

But especially we must mark those two great facts concerning Christ—His *Crucifixion* and His *Resurrection*—and the manner of the appearance of these facts in the Epistles under our attention. As to these two literal occurrences, "the preaching of the cross"<sup>6</sup> had been St. Paul's main point at Corinth. He goes so far as to say that he had "determined to know nothing among the

The  
crucifixion  
and  
resurrection  
of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 16, 17; Acts xvii. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xv. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. x. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xv. 13.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. i. 18.

Corinthians, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”<sup>1</sup> So, in regard to Galatia, his appeal to his converts there is, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”<sup>2</sup> Nor ought we to omit the mention of a point of detail, which appears quite incidentally in one of these letters. It is noted that Christ was crucified by “the princes of this world,”<sup>3</sup> a circumstance which exactly describes the action of Pontius Pilate, as the representative of the Roman Power, while yet it is as remote as possible from any semblance of imitation in the construction of the Gospel. And as with the Crucifixion, so with the co-ordinate fact of the Resurrection. If it is “Christ that died,” who is the great subject of St. Paul’s teaching, it is “rather,” as he says in the Epistle to the Romans, “Christ that is risen again.”<sup>4</sup> It is especially in the First Epistle to the Corinthians that the Resurrection of Christ is asserted, with extreme force, as a literal occurrence. The fact had been denied at Corinth, and the refutation of this denial supplies to us at once a link of great value with the Gospel history.<sup>5</sup>

Christ  
crucified by  
the princes  
of this  
world.

The  
testimony  
of the First  
Epistle to  
the Corin-  
thians to the  
resurrec-  
tion.

It is not necessary here to give minute attention to the reconciliation of the instances of Christ’s

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 34.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3-8, 15.

appearances after the Resurrection, with the instances given in the Gospels and the Acts. My point is simply this, that it is Christ as risen from the dead who is the subject of St. Paul's teaching in these Epistles, just as it is Christ as risen from the dead who concludes the Evangelic histories.

The doctrinal and moral uses to which these great facts—the Crucifixion and the Resurrection are applied—belong rather to the next paragraph than to this; yet they may just be mentioned here.

The doctrinal and moral uses of the crucifixion and resurrection.

In such passages as the following: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts:" "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:" "If we be dead with Christ we shall also live with Him:" "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord:" "Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God; for we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you"<sup>1</sup>—the very allegorical use of the facts shows how deeply the facts had penetrated into the innermost convictions of the writer,—while, to view the matter on another side, such passages are in entire harmony with the same writer's language in the other Epistles attributed to him. Two instances only need be given: one where he

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 24; ii. 20; Rom. vi. 8; vi. 11; 2 Cor. xiii. 4.

says to the Philippians that he earnestly desires "that he may know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death"<sup>1</sup>—the other, where he says to the Colossians, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."<sup>2</sup>

The  
doctrines  
contained  
in the  
Epistles.

2. As to the *doctrines* which attract our attention in these four Epistles, there is no doubt that they present Christianity to us, under certain aspects, as a very remarkable religion. And first we note the extraordinary importance assigned in it to *faith*. A broad statement of the case is the following: "In the Gospel of Christ is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith."<sup>3</sup> A still stronger statement is the following: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;"<sup>4</sup> and the same doctrine is equally conspicuous elsewhere within the narrow range of the documents before us: "They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.—Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.—We through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."<sup>5</sup> This presentation of a new religious system is certainly, as has been said,

The  
importance  
assigned to  
faith.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. i. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. iv. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. iii. 9, 26; v. 5.

remarkable; and this is to be observed, that it is in strict harmony with the place assigned to faith in Christ's own teaching, and in the account of His miracles, as given to us in the Gospels. The sayings of our Lord to the Syro-Phœnician suppliant, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt;"<sup>1</sup> and to another who approached Him, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole;"<sup>2</sup> to the disciples, "If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done; and all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive;"<sup>3</sup> and again, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them,"<sup>4</sup>—these sayings are quite as strong as anything of the kind which we find in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians; and in character and meaning they are very similar to the passages which have been quoted from these Epistles. The same argument might be presented in another form in connection with the subject of justification, and what St. Paul writes concerning it in these Epistles might be set side by side with what he is alleged to have said concerning it to the Jews at the Pisidian Antioch: "By Christ all that believe are justi-

In harmony with Christ's own teachings.

The Syro-Phœnician woman.

Promises to the disciples.

Faith and justification.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xv. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxi. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* xxi. 24.

Redemption.

fied from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”<sup>1</sup> But, to turn to another doctrine, which likewise is very prominent in these four Epistles, and which might be expressed in one word as the doctrine of *redemption*, St. Paul says, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that Christ, while placed toward us in other spiritual relations also, is “made unto us redemption.”<sup>2</sup> In the same Epistle he says more pointedly, and more than once, that we are “bought with a price.”<sup>3</sup> In the Epistle to the Galatians he says that Christ “gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world;” and that He “redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us.”<sup>4</sup> These are most remarkable phrases; but they correspond in doctrine with what we find in other parts of the New Testament—notably in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the First Epistle of St. John, and in the Book of Revelation. And if one more instance is to be adduced for the sake of giving something like completeness to the representation of the characteristic doctrine of these four Epistles, it might be what it taught there concerning *the power of the Holy Ghost*. In this “sending down of the Holy Ghost from heaven”<sup>5</sup>

The power  
of the Holy  
Ghost.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiii. 39.      <sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 20; vii. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. iii. 13.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Peter i. 12.

we have in truth both a fact and a doctrine. In the Gospels this sending is exhibited as the most conspicuous promise of the Saviour; in the early part of the Acts the first fulfilment of the promise is recorded; and such passages as those which we find in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and the fifth of that to the Galatians, are such as might be expected from such a root and such a flower.

3. But Christianity, besides the facts on which it rests, and besides the doctrines which it teaches, has *institutions* which it prescribes, and by which it is continuously supported. Primarily, of course, we must have reference here to the two Sacraments—to Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Their definite appointment in the Gospel-time, and their observance, as a matter of course, in the early Apostolic time, need only be stated. These facts lie on the surface of the two great historic parts of the New Testament. But the observance and high spiritual meaning of these two ceremonies lie embedded in these four Epistles, which form the occasion of the present argument, so that the harmony between the epistolary and narrative exhibitions of Christianity in this respect, is complete, while yet it is quite natural and unaffected. In the Epistle to the Romans we read, “Know ye not that so many of us

Institutions.

The  
Sacraments.Spiritual  
significance  
of baptism.



as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death: therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death.”<sup>1</sup> In the First Epistle to the Corinthians we read, “Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”<sup>2</sup> and again, “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”<sup>3</sup> In the Epistle to the Galatians we read, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”<sup>4</sup> And if an allegorical application, as some may deem it, is in certain of such passages made of the act of Baptism, this rather enhances the value of the connection which we are tracing, for we see here a living religion rising high above mere ceremony. The notices of the other sacrament are less diffused through this group of Epistles; in fact, they are concentrated in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. But they are there concentrated with so much force, that they are riveted, so to speak, upon the Gospel-history. In the literal account that is given of the founding of the Lord’s Supper there is so much resemblance to the account supplied in the Gospel according to St. Luke,<sup>5</sup> that it is very difficult not to believe that there was some personal communication on this subject between these two writers. And the indications of such a personal com-

The  
Lord’s  
Supper.

St. Luke’s  
and St.  
Paul’s  
accounts  
of the  
institution  
of it.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. iii. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Luke xxi. 17, 21.



munication are in themselves manifestly of some evidential value. And here again, as in the case of the other great Christian ordinance, if we find a great religious principle associated with it, as in such words as "we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of one bread,"<sup>1</sup> this binds together for us the literal founding of Christianity described to us in one part of Scripture, with the reality of a living religion, as exhibited to us in another part.

The religious principle associated with it.

As to the existence of appointed ministrations in the Church which these letters depict, it is remarkable that the most definite phraseology on the subject relates to the ministry of women. Phœbe is named as a "deacon" of the Church at Cenchrea.<sup>2</sup> In fact, she is the only person in the New Testament whose name is associated with this title.<sup>3</sup> It is, however, worth noticing, as a curious coincidence, that this tallies very well with the philanthropic aspect of the origin of the Christian Ministry, as exhibited in the Acts.<sup>4</sup> But

Ministry in the Church.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 17

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xvi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen and his six companions (Acts xvi. 5) are not called Deacons; and the Deacons of Phil. i. 1 and 1 Tim. (iii. 8-13) are merely mentioned in general terms. In 1 Tim. iii. 11, the Revised Version gives the correct meaning, and shows that women-deacons or deaconesses are intended.

<sup>4</sup> The necessities of philanthropy (Acts vi. 1) give the occasion to the diaconate of Stephen and the others; and it is in connection with philanthropy (Acts xi. 30) that the presbyters of the Christian Church are first mentioned.

as to the existence of a stated ministry in the Church, the broad general principle enunciated in the First Epistle to the Corinthians is decisive: "Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things live of the things of the Temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord also ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup> This, by the hypothesis, belongs to a comparatively early period of St. Paul's apostolic life; and if it is somewhat general, whereas, at a later period of that life, in the Epistle to the Philippians,<sup>2</sup> and, later still, in the Pastoral Epistles,<sup>3</sup> this subject appears in a more mature form,—in this, to say the least, there is no inconsistency. Again, in these four Epistles, as elsewhere, the corporate life of the Church, the exercise of discipline, the assembling together for public worship, are assumed. And, to end this slight notice of institutions, there is in one of these letters a naming of "the first day of the week," which reminds us of the same phrase in the Gospels and the Acts, and almost inevitably carries us on to the thought of the religious observance of Sunday.<sup>4</sup>

The corporate life and discipline of the Church.

Observance of Sunday.

4. Thus, tested by allusions to facts, by statements

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. i. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 8-13.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 2. See Matt. xxviii. 1; Acts xx. 17.

of doctrine, and by the expressed or implied existence of institutions, does this small group of Epistles hold out a hand in one direction, so as intimately to grasp the Gospels; while with like intimacy they hold out another hand to grasp the remaining Epistles attributed to the same writer. But another part of the same connection ought at least just to be touched. This is the evidence supplied by reference to *persons*. If the Evangelical history is true, it was by living agents that the Gospel was to be spread through the world; and some of the living agents are named: and among them the most conspicuous is St. Peter. Now, references to Peter are found in the Epistles before us. If it were not so, there would be the appearance of a dissidence and wide separation between the Christianity of these Epistles and the Christianity of the Gospels and the Acts. But, as the case stands, this personal link of connection is quite real, while perfectly casual and incidental. In giving to the Galatians an account of his early Christian life, St. Paul, while asserting in the strongest way his independent apostleship, says that he eagerly desired to make Peter's acquaintance. "I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."<sup>1</sup> What could be more natural? How could it have been otherwise if St. Paul's experience had been what it is de-

References  
to persons.

St. Peter.

St. Paul's  
visit to him.

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 18.

Incon-  
sistency of  
St Peter at  
Antioch.

Previous  
inconsis-  
tency on  
his part.

Party spirit  
at Corinth.

scribed to have been in the early part of the Acts, and if St. Peter had been what he is said in the Gospels to have been? And he supplies another very unexpected, yet very cogent, instance of affinity between this Epistle and the Gospel history. Peter, with his old impulsiveness, fell into a sudden inconsistency, so as actually to imperil the true religious standing of many of his fellow-Christians, and so that a public expostulation and rebuke became necessary on the part of St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> That happened once more at Antioch, which had happened on the Sea of Tiberias<sup>2</sup> and in the house of the High Priest at Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> Yet who could be so perverse as to say that there is here any ingenious invention of identity of character for the sake of procuring credit to documents not really authentic? As regards certain circumstances recorded in this Epistle as having happened at Jerusalem, the position of St. Peter in respect of them exactly corresponds with his position on the same occasion as narrated in the Acts, while yet with some incidental difficulties on the surface, which require explanation, and therefore prove independence of narration. And to add one other reference to the same disciple in this group of Epistles, we find that when party spirit ran high at Corinth, the head of one party was Paul, and the head of

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xiv. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvi. 69, 70.

another party was Peter.<sup>1</sup> This is just what might have been expected. The refutation of this party spirit is in the comprehensive assertion: "Whether it be Paul or Peter, all are yours."<sup>2</sup> But if Peter was what he is elsewhere recorded to have been, it is most natural that human passion and prejudice should have placed him in this position. And to end this section of the subject by referring to the statement which another part of the First Epistle to the Corinthians contains of an appearance to Peter after the Resurrection,<sup>3</sup> this exactly corresponds with what we read in the Gospel of St. Luke.<sup>4</sup> Probably it may be a reminiscence of those early conversations between St. Peter and St. Paul.

The  
appearance  
of the risen  
Saviour to  
St. Peter.

On the whole it seems very clear that when we hold firmly what we have in these four Epistles, we find that we have in our hands something very solid and strong, from which we can follow, link by link, chains which conduct us into other parts of the New Testament, with the conviction that all are connected together by consistency and mutual understanding,—that the same general character belongs to the whole, that, having confidence in these four Epistles, we must diffuse our confidence further. Having accepted our starting-point, we cannot stop there. We are in possession of more

Conclusion  
from the  
above  
argument.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxiv. 34.

—we are in possession of all—if we are in possession of this.

Christianity  
a revelation  
of God's  
character.

And there is another way of looking at the matter, not different from the former, but appealing with almost greater persuasiveness to our feelings and our conscience. Having in these Epistles Christianity fresh in view before us, as a divine religion, “we have confidence towards God.”<sup>1</sup> We are sure that He will not deceive us. This religion is not merely a system of doctrines and institutions, with historic facts as its basis, and historic personages to propagate it, but it is a revelation of God's character. We follow on where He leads us through the other parts of the Gospel Scriptures. The inundation of doubt, which may have seemed to overspread some parts of them, tends to disappear. “The waters are dried up from off the earth: behold, the face of the ground is dry.”<sup>2</sup>

## II.

The  
personality  
of St. Paul.

ANOTHER broad view of the subject before us is connected with *the personality of St. Paul*. In reading these four Epistles, even if we knew nothing of the documentary and historical environment from which we cannot separate them, we should be startled by the features of character

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. viii. 13.

indicated in these four documents, and by the definite manner in which they set before our view a most extraordinary person. His enthusiasm, his aggressive missionary zeal, his devotion to that Master, real or imaginary, whom he has been led to serve, are palpable. And are we not justified in saying, parenthetically, that it is very difficult to conceive of such literal devotion to a Master whose claims are imaginary? Equally palpable, too, are the writer's strong sense, his vehement logic, and his alternation between tender sympathy and indignant expostulation. On the whole, it is a most complicated, yet most natural personality, which these letters force us to contemplate. And now let us observe that it is precisely the same character which comes to view on reading the other Epistles attributed to St. Paul, and the treatise which is called the Acts of the Apostles: and, at all events, those letters and this treatise exist. If the opinion which has hitherto been generally accepted is true, that the same man did write the other letters, and that the Book of the Acts is an honest, trustworthy document, then everything is easy, all the phenomena are explained. But then it is to be observed that this implies a diffusion of confidence in regard to these other books. If we accept what we find in these four Epistles, we are constrained to follow a conclusion which ranges over a much wider surface. But we

Most  
complicated  
and yet  
most  
natural.

The same  
character  
appears  
alike in the  
Epistles and  
the Acts.



must not be content with this general setting forth of the argument at this point. The topic before us deserves to be handled in detail.

St. Paul's  
calling to  
the apostle-  
ship.

1. In three of these selected Epistles, St. Paul lays the utmost stress upon his separate direct "*calling*" to the apostleship. In fact it is, in each of these three, his starting-point. In writing to the Romans he says that he was "called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God," that by Christ he has "received grace and apostleship;"<sup>1</sup> he begins his first letter to the Corinthians by saying that he is "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ;"<sup>2</sup> and in addressing the Galatians he is even more emphatic and exclusive in his language: he is an apostle "neither of men nor by man;" he neither "received the Gospel of man," nor was he so "taught" it, but "by the revelation of Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> If we believe him, we are face to face with a Divine communication. If not, we must doubt either his veracity or his sanity; and it seems very difficult to reconcile either doubt with the impression we derive from the reading of these four Epistles.

Direct from  
God.

But the point immediately under consideration is this, that the assertion of a direct calling and revelation to himself personally is in strict and natural harmony with what we find in the Acts of the Apostles. Three times in that book is

Accounts  
of his  
conversion.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 1, 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. i. 1, 12.



his sudden conversion related with emphasis and in detail: and not only must our attention be given to the facts which are alleged to have taken place on the way to Damascus; but in the vision which Ananias is said to have seen in that city it is expressly said that Paul was "a chosen vessel" to bear Christ's name "before the Gentiles;"<sup>1</sup> while not at Damascus only, but at Jerusalem also, soon afterwards, in a vision of St. Paul himself, this direct calling was, according to his own account, reiterated. "Depart, for I will send thee far away to the Gentiles."<sup>2</sup> Thus a most momentous part of St. Paul's personal history is set before us in perfect harmony by these four Epistles, and by the historical narrative. And the same argument may be extended to other Epistles which bear the name of St. Paul. This consciousness of a direct personal call for work among the Gentiles is evident throughout these writings. Thus, in writing to the Ephesians of this Gospel with which he was commissioned, he says: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power."<sup>3</sup>

Visions of  
Ananias and  
St. Paul.

St. Paul's  
conscious-  
ness of a  
direct per-  
sonal call.

2. In writing to the Galatians St. Paul says: "Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I *per-*

His previous  
life.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xxii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. iii. 7.

*secuted* the church of God and wasted it.”<sup>1</sup> And similar language, though arising out of a totally different context, is found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians: “I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God: but by the grace of God I am what I am.”<sup>2</sup> The same earnest, penitent, sorrowful remembrance of this part of his personal history is found elsewhere, outside the limits of his third group of four Epistles. Thus, in the letter to the Philippians, he says that, “as regards zeal” in Judaism, if a proof of that were wanting he had been “a persecutor of the church,”<sup>3</sup> while in another letter of a different date he recurs with the utmost depth of feeling to this part of his life: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.”<sup>4</sup> We find precisely the same habit of reference to this subject in speeches given in the Acts of the Apostles. He says to the mob of Jews in the Temple Court, that “being zealous, as they all were that day,” he says that he had “persecuted” the Christians “unto death,” binding and delivering into prison not only men but “women;”<sup>5</sup> and he tells before Festus and Agrippa how he had “shut

Penitential  
reminis-  
cences.

Gratitude  
for his call.

His speech  
to the Jews  
in the  
Temple  
Court.

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. iii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. i. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xxii. 19.

up many in prison ; ” how he “ had compelled them to blaspheme ; ” how, “ being exceedingly mad against them, he had persecuted them unto strange cities.”<sup>1</sup> Nothing could be in closer correspondence with the language used in the Epistle to the Galatians ; nor could anything be in closer correspondence with the facts of the case as recorded in the earlier part of the Book of the Acts. It is evidently the same personality of St. Paul which we meet in all these cases.

The same personality in the Acts and the Epistles.

3. This zealous, vehement, untiring persecution, in obedience to a misguided conscience, may in itself be viewed as indicating a part of *the personal character* of St. Paul : and, to pass now from facts of his experience to features of his temperament, we may first take one which is closely allied to what has just now been before us. This is *his unwearied energy and laborious activity*. That this was a feature of his character no one can doubt, who takes his impression from the four Epistles which are the groundwork of this inquiry. He is all eagerness to visit Rome.<sup>2</sup> After he has been there, he hopes to go to Spain. Meanwhile he is going on an important errand to Jerusalem. “ All round about unto Illyricum he has fully preached the Gospel of Christ.”<sup>3</sup> His impatient eagerness at Troas, when Titus failed to come to him with news from Macedonia, is evidently

St. Paul's energy and activity.

His impatient eagerness.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxvi. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. i. 11 ; xv. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xv. 19.

His abundant labours.

characteristic.<sup>1</sup> The manner in which he speaks of having been detained by illness in Galatia seems to express the same kind of feeling.<sup>2</sup> The astonishing account of his labours in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians<sup>3</sup> bears upon it all the marks of truth, so that he is fully justified in the statement he makes in the First Epistle, that "he laboured more abundantly than they all;"<sup>4</sup> adding, however, (and the addition carries with it a world of evidence as to the reality of the Gospel which he bore,) "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

His incessant journeyings.

Now put side by side with this the impression we derive, as to this particular point, from the Acts of the Apostles; and is it not quite evident that we have the same man before us? His incessant travelling from place to place, his vehement labour wherever he stayed, are in exact harmony with the statement in the second letter to the Corinthians, though it is quite evident that that passage was not at all in the historian's thoughts when he wrote the treatise. No reference is made here to correspondence of persons, places, and circumstances—a subject which belongs to a later part of the argument—but rather to indications of a certain tone of mind.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iv. 13. "*Because of infirmity*" is the correct translation:

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 23-28.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 10.

“*Immediately*,” he says, on recounting what took place at Damascus, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.”<sup>1</sup> So, on another occasion, when summoned by a Divine communication to go into Europe: “*Immediately* we endeavoured to go into Macedonia.”<sup>2</sup> So, again, on arriving in Rome, whatever the fatigues of the voyage and journey had been, whatever his infirmity of health, we find him “after three days” calling the Jews together that he might argue with them on behalf of the Gospel.<sup>3</sup> His rising up from a state of insensibility at Lystra, after stoning, and proceeding “the next day” to Derbe, bespeak alacrity and courage;<sup>4</sup> while the same impatience, demanding some strong discipline, which we have observed in the Epistles, seems evident in what we read concerning the approach to the Ægean from the interior: “when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not: and they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.”<sup>5</sup> That the same energetic, active, laborious character is presented to us throughout the range of the Epistles, which besides these four, are attributed to St. Paul, will

His alacrity  
and courage.

The same  
character  
appears in  
all the  
Epistles.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxvi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xvi. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxviii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* xiv. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xvi. 6-8.

hardly be denied.<sup>1</sup> We might sum up the whole case of agreement by a phrase which he uses alike in his speech to the Ephesian elders, and in his two letters to the Thessalonians, when he speaks of his labours of various kinds as continued "*night and day.*"<sup>2</sup>

His tact.

His sympathetic nature.

His craving for sympathy.

4. We may now pass from St. Paul's unwearied industry, to *his quick sympathy, his tenderness, his tact*. The very contrast has in it an element of persuasiveness. It is in the combination of two very opposite qualities that we recognize especially the personality of St. Paul. His tact is visible in his praising the Corinthians before he blames them: his sympathy in the deep feeling with which he welcomes the offender on his repentance.<sup>3</sup> But the sympathetic nature of the Apostle is made manifest in other ways, and in ways which, because less direct, are the more important for our purpose. He craves for the sympathy of others. Thus put together what he says of the "temptation" in his flesh, when writing to the Galatians, and of the "thorn in the flesh" when writing to the Corinthians.<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that these two expressions refer to the same subject; and in each case he so names it as to

<sup>1</sup> Niemeyer says truly, in his *Charakteristik der Bibel* (I. p. 215), "Paulus ist überall der geschäftig arbeitende Mann."

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 7; Gal. iv. 14.

make a demand on the considerate care and feeling of those to whom he writes. The same habit of character, if such an expression may be allowed, is evident near the end of the Epistle to the Romans. He is about to go to Jerusalem with alms carefully collected in various places for the poor Christians in Judæa ; but his heart is full of fear. “Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me ; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa ; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints ; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.”<sup>1</sup> It is the more important to dwell carefully on this passage, because we can connect it, by manifest signs of identity of feeling, with that part of the historic narrative to which other circumstances show that it belongs. There is a most evident shade of melancholy upon this part of St. Paul’s biography, as we trace him on his return voyage from Corinth, whence he wrote this Epistle, to Jerusalem, where he was arrested by the Roman soldiers. At Miletus he has the sad foreboding of “bonds and afflictions ;”<sup>2</sup> the sorrowful feeling and deep craving for sympathy with which he addresses there the Ephesian

His fears.

His melancholy.

His forebodings.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xv. 30-32.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xx. 23.



His parting  
with the  
Ephesian  
elders.

elders cannot be mistaken. And our impression of the scene is deepened as we read of what took place at the close of it. "When he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all: and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that he should see their face no more"<sup>1</sup> From Ephesus the vessel went to Tyre; and there a description of a similar scene is given. They all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down and prayed. "And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again."<sup>2</sup> Thence they went to Ptolemais, and next day to Cæsarea, where he is again warned of impending danger, and the disciples do their best to hinder him from going to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased," writes St. Luke, "saying, The will of the Lord be done."<sup>3</sup> All this should be carefully put side by side with the passage quoted above from the Epistle to the Romans: for it combines with it in elucidating one side of St. Paul's character.

His perse-  
verance at  
all hazards.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 36-38.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxi. 5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xxi. 13, 14.



There is strict correspondence: yet evidently no imitation. It is the same side of character as that which is shown in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. "I wrote to you with many tears—Ye are in our hearts to live and die with you."<sup>1</sup> And yet it is perhaps in personal friendship and in small particulars that sympathy makes itself most evident. In the last-named Epistle St. Paul's personal feeling towards Titus is very similar to his personal feeling towards Epaphroditus, as manifested in the letter to the Philippians.<sup>2</sup> And, to conclude what is brought forward under this head, the whole tone of that Epistle, as also of the Epistle to the Galatians, receives an illustration from two sentences in the narrative of the Acts, which are seen to be full of meaning when looked at in this connection. The first is at the moment of leaving the Syrian coast: "The next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself."<sup>3</sup> The second is on the high road in Italy, when the prisoners were approaching Rome: "The brethren came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns, whom, when

Correspondence without imitation between the Acts and Romans.

Personal friendships of St. Paul.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 4; vii. 3. This point is summed up, with great force and beauty, by Adolphe Monod, in a sermon entitled "*Les Larmes de Saint Paul*," in his *Saint Paul*. I may perhaps also be allowed here to refer to the *Hulsean Lectures* for 1860 (third edition).

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxvii. 3.

Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.”<sup>1</sup> In order to see all that is reflected, on these two occasions, in the language of St. Luke, “the beloved physician,”<sup>2</sup> we must take into account St. Paul’s delicate health, his privation and imprisonment, his discouragements and his fatigue.

The feelings  
resulting  
from a  
survey of  
these four  
Epistles.

Is it not quite evident that when we thus range over these four Epistles in companionship, so to speak, with their acknowledged author, we become conscious that we are not on an island, with the barren sea around us, but on a table-land, from whence we can survey a wide and fruitful country, both near to us and far off? And not only so. Is it not quite evident that this table-land is, so to speak, organically connected by strong continuous ridges, and by rich opening valleys, with the wide country that is so suggestive of admiration and contentment?

### III.

BUT independently of the general argument which resides in the identity of St. Paul’s character, as presented to us by these four acknowledged Epistles, and those other parts of the New Testament which for the moment are supposed to be under suspicion, there is the *comparison in various points of detail* between these four documents and that part of the Acts of the Apostles

Argument  
from  
detailed  
comparison  
with the  
Acts of the  
Apostles.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* xxviii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iv. 14.

which relates to the period of his life during which he wrote them. In this way of stating the question there is nothing illogical. The narrative of the Acts is here only hypothetically assumed to be true. If it turns out, on a close comparison, that the narrative, without being forced, fits the Epistles so that notices of facts and persons and places fall into order easily, while yet it is evident that the narrative and the Epistles are independent sources of information, then the hypothesis becomes an argument. It comes to us with its hand full of strong evidence. The key that fits the lock is probably the right key. The confidence inspired by the four letters tends to spread itself over this part, at least, of the apostolic history. But let us see how the matter stands in detail.

1. In the account of St. Paul's first arrival at Corinth, on his second journey, it is said that he met with Aquila and Priscilla, and that "because he was of the same craft he abode with them and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers."<sup>1</sup> And at a subsequent part of the history, when he has summoned the presbyters of Ephesus to an interview at Miletus, there is a very dramatic allusion to the same subject. He holds up his hands while speaking, and says, "Ye yourselves know that *these hands* have ministered

St. Paul's  
trade as a  
tent-maker.

His appeal  
to the  
elders of  
Ephesus.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xviii 3.

unto my necessities, and to them that were with me: I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak.”<sup>1</sup> The mere comparison of these two passages ought to tend to give us confidence in the Book of the Acts. They are in the most natural, yet the most curious, harmony with one another. What St. Paul had done at Corinth, he had done at Ephesus. There is a consistency in this which is quite worthy of notice. And, further, in the one case this habit of St. Paul is mentioned merely as a fact in the course of the history: in the other it is named by himself, in a serious address, for the purpose of drawing from it a moral lesson. The unaffected naturalness of this should be observed.

Allusions  
in the  
Epistles.

Now the point before us is the reappearance of this fact of St. Paul's biography in our four Epistles, and in the manner of its appearance. They belong by the hypothesis to the same general period of his life. In writing from Ephesus the First Epistle to the Corinthians (and every circumstance fits the supposition of this place and date), he says: “Even unto this present hour I labour, working with my own hands.”<sup>2</sup> Those who read the letter at Corinth had known him to be thus engaged, and they would feel the force of the appeal involved in the words “unto this present hour,” even as the presbyters of Ephesus would feel the force

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxi. 34.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 12.

of the phrase "these hands." Yet the wildest imagination could hardly suggest that one of these passages was invented to fit the other.

But the comparison here instituted along the line of this habit of St. Paul's life carries us further. In another part of the same Epistle he virtually asserts that he might have "forborne working" with his own hands, that "the Lord has ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel;" but he had resolved not to use this power, that he might secure the additional influence arising through "making the gospel of Christ without charge."<sup>1</sup> Thus, as at Miletus, he draws a moral lesson from this habit of his life.

Why he worked with his own hands.

Reason given to the elders of Ephesus.

Nor is this the only instance of the same kind in the Epistles attributed to this Apostle. This discussion cannot be pursued without turning first in one direction and then in another; and wherever we turn we gather new evidence to confirm our faith. Writing to the Thessalonians he says: "Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God;"<sup>2</sup> and again in the second letter: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample

In his Epistle to the Thessalonians.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 16.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 9.

Draws a  
moral lesson  
from his  
practice.

unto you to follow us.”<sup>1</sup> Thus what he had practised at Corinth and at Ephesus, he had practised likewise at Thessalonica, the third great mercantile city of the Ægean Sea. And not only so, but in each of these cases, in writing to Corinth, in writing to Thessalonica, in speaking at Miletus, he uses the same fact of his life to point a moral lesson. Yet can any one say that these notices have been, in the slightest degree, borrowed from one another? Surely no fair mind can deny that, starting from the point taken in the uncontroverted Epistles, and following these paths through the Acts of the Apostles, and through Epistles outside the accepted group, we have found reasons for extending our confidence to those other parts of the New Testament.

Notices of  
Aquila and  
Priscilla.

At Ephesus.

2. The transition from this subject to the notices of *Aquila and Priscilla* in our group of Epistles is easy and natural.<sup>2</sup> These notices are two. In the first letter to the Corinthians, written from Ephesus, we find the following passage: “Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. viii. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> This is only a specimen of the evidence that might be supplied by reference to persons. Thus Apollos might be brought forward as a very conclusive link between the Acts and our four Epistles. In 1 Cor. iii. 6 we find it said, “I have planted, Apollos watered.” This exactly, yet most artlessly, corresponds with what we learn from the Acts. Paul was first at Corinth, and then Apollos: and Apollos went to Corinth before the writing of this letter.

that is in their house.”<sup>1</sup> In the letter to the Romans we find the passage: “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my sake laid down their necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles: likewise greet the church that is in their house.”<sup>2</sup> In the one case we see these two friends of the Apostle in Ephesus, in the other we see them in Rome: the two places are widely separated; yet these two Epistles are assumed to have been written during the same Missionary Journey. At first sight this appears like a discrepancy. This appearance, however, soon dissolves into nothing upon careful examination. In the Acts it is said that the acquaintance was first formed at Corinth, under the following circumstances, before the close of the Second Missionary Journey: “at Corinth Paul found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome), and came unto them; and because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought; for by their occupation they were tent-makers.”<sup>3</sup> Next, on leaving Corinth and touching at Ephesus, he “left them there;”<sup>4</sup> and there they were eminently useful in the instruction of Apollos, before he pro-

At Rome.

Apparent  
discrepancy.

Explana-  
tion.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xvi. 3, 4.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xviii. 19.



Harmony  
of the  
references  
to them.

ceeded to Corinth. All this is in most easy harmony with what we read in the first letter to the Corinthians, both as to the fact that St. Paul finds them at Ephesus, on his entering upon the Third Missionary Journey; and also as to their utility to the Church and their friendly relations with Corinth. Yet it would be very difficult for even the most suspicious critic to contend that all this was suggested by the passage in the letter, and ingeniously interwoven into the narrative of the Acts, in order to procure credit to that document.

Time for  
them to  
have  
reached  
Rome.

And now as to our finding these two Christians in Rome, to which place another letter is written during the same journey, there really is no difficulty whatever in this. Adopting the usual calculations, for which the materials are ample, we find there was abundant time for Aquila and Priscilla to have reached Rome before the letter was written to that place from Corinth. It may be added that such voyages would be very natural for Jews engaged in trade; while the strong language in the Epistle to the Romans, concerning the devotedness, the utility, and hospitality of these two persons, and their friendship towards himself, is in harmony with all that we read in the Acts. It must be added that there is one more notice of them in the New Testament. In the Second Epistle to Timothy, which, if genuine, was the latest that the Apostle wrote,

Reference  
to them in  
the 2nd  
Epistle to  
Timothy.



we find this: "Salute Prisca and Aquila."<sup>1</sup> Timothy seems then to have been at Ephesus; and all that need be said on this point is that they should be once more in this mercantile city, and that St. Paul's friendship towards them should continue to the end, is perfectly natural. On the whole it seems altogether reasonable to contend that such biographical threads justify our disposition to combine together St. Paul's Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles in one general conviction of trustworthiness.

3. But we may now turn to a subject of a totally different kind, with the view of ascertaining the probable relation of these three Epistles to the historic narrative. It is impossible to read these three Epistles without perceiving how strongly pervaded St. Paul was, at the time of writing them, with the anxious interest of *a certain collection* he was promoting *for the poor Christians in Judæa*. The facts of the case and his feeling on the subject are summed up in the following sentence of the Epistle to the Romans: "Now I am going unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints: for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints that are in Jerusalem."<sup>2</sup> If we examine the letters to the Corinthians, we see a very large space given to this

The  
collection  
for the poor  
saints in  
Judæa.

References  
to it in the  
Epistles to  
the Romans  
and Corin-  
thians.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xv. 25, 26, .

subject, with the expression of much importunity. From the first of these letters it appears that he had been doing in Galatia, in regard to this collection, what he had been doing in Macedonia and Achaia; and moreover that the most systematic arrangements were made for the completion of the "gatherings" at Corinth, and the conveying of them to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> If we turn to the Second Epistle, we find two whole chapters given to this subject with great earnestness of feeling.<sup>2</sup> Now, at first sight it might be thought very strange that a subject which engrossed St. Paul's attention and emotion so much during his sojourn in Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia should not be named in the direct narrative. A considerable space is devoted in the Book of the Acts to details of what occurred in this particular part of St. Paul's life; yet no mention is made there of the active business of this collection, which was certainly going on then. Now, we may say with confidence that there would have been some mention of the subject if this part of the narrative had been intentionally and ingeniously constructed, so as to fit what we find in the Epistles. Hence we have in this fact an argument for the independence of the Book of the Acts. But if we read on beyond this part of it to the account of what took place in Judæa, after St. Paul had been apprehended

Two chapters on the subject in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians.

Not noticed in the history of this part of St. Paul's life in the Acts.

An argument for the independence of the Book.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. viii., ix.

in the Temple at Jerusalem, and was on his trial at Cæsarea, we find quite casually and unexpectedly, yet quite naturally, this business on which St. Paul was at this period so intent, coming to view. He says before Felix, regarding the errand on which he had been brought to Jerusalem: "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation and offerings." <sup>1</sup> This is a sudden note of inner harmony between the two classes of documents that are before us, which is of the utmost value to us in estimating their authenticity.

Incidentally referred to at a later period.

In his speech before Felix.

And there is a wider view of the subject, which ought by no means to be omitted, for it strengthens the argument considerably. This is not the only place in the Acts of the Apostles where we find St. Paul actively interested in the benevolent collecting of money for the poor in Judæa. At a much earlier period (at the end of the eleventh chapter, and at the end of the twelfth) he is represented to us as busily engaged in the same way. Taking the evidence that is before us, we might almost say that this was one of the enthusiasms of his life. And the very same thing comes to view in the fourth of that group of Epistles, of which three have been already adduced in connection with this topic. After the account in the Epistle to the Galatians of the conference at Jerusalem regarding the necessity of circum-

An earlier collection.

One of the enthusiasms of his life.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxiv. 17.

cision for Gentile converts, and after the statement of the general agreement regarding the division of spiritual labour between St. Peter and St. Paul, it is added: "Only they would that we should remember the poor, *the same which I also was forward to do.*"<sup>1</sup> Thus there emerges here also, quite naturally and unexpectedly, from the context a proof alike of the necessitous condition of the Christians in Judæa, and of St. Paul's industrious alacrity to procure for them relief.

References  
to places.

4. The same kind of argument which arises out of an observation of persons and circumstances, can be drawn likewise from the mention of *places*. All other instances being set on one side, an illustration may be given from the manner in which *Damascus* is named, both in two of the Epistles before us, and in the Book of the Acts; that Damascus should have been indelibly impressed on St. Paul's mind, that every circumstance of his approach to that city, of his experience within it, of his flight from its walls, should have remained vivid in his memory ever after is absolutely certain, if the story related in the ninth chapter of this book is true. Thus, in the stories related in the twenty-second and twenty-sixth chapters, we are not surprised to find the reiterated naming of Damascus in St. Paul's two speeches. When he is addressing the Hebrew mob, under circumstances of great ex-

Damascus.

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 10.

citement, he says, "I went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound to Jerusalem;" and he proceeds, "As I came nigh unto Damascus, suddenly there shone a great light round about me." and presently afterwards, "being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus."<sup>1</sup> So, when he is speaking before Festus and Agrippa, he says, "As I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday I saw a light from heaven;" and when he has described "the heavenly vision," and said that he was "not disobedient to it," he adds that first "unto them of Damascus" he showed the necessity of repentance and of "works meet for repentance."<sup>2</sup> All this reiteration of the name of the place is true to nature and to the facts of the story. It is not at all necessary to his argument. If he had been on the way to Alexandria or to Antioch, when the vision from heaven led to his conversion, the result as to persuasion and conviction would have been the same. But the whole local scene on the south of the wall of Damascus was indelibly impressed on his memory. And now we may add, that what we find in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians and the Epistle to the Galatians is equally true to nature and to the facts which he so vividly remembered. "In Damascus, the governor under Aretas, the king, kept the city of the Damas-

His conversion near Damascus.

His references to it in his speech before Festus and Agrippa.

In the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxii. 6, 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xxvi.

cenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.”<sup>1</sup> The agreement of this account of his escape with the account given of the same transaction in the Acts, while yet “it is related with such difference of circumstances as renders it utterly improbable that one should be derived from the other” has been noted by Paley;<sup>2</sup> and to what he says this might be added that there is no mention whatever of Aretas in the Acts. But the points to which the reader’s attention is here asked is this, that St. Paul’s quick feeling and memory regarding this subject are manifest. Damascus was impressed upon his recollection as no other place in the world had been. And a similar remark may be made of the manner of the allusion to the same city in the nearly contemporary Epistle to the Galatians. He is speaking of his call to the apostleship, and he says: “When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.”<sup>3</sup> We might remark on the exact, yet evidently undesigned, connection of this with what is stated in the direct narrative: “Straightway” at Damascus “he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God,” and with his

His feeling  
towards  
Damascus.

His  
reference in  
the Epistle  
to the  
Galatians.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Horæ Paulinæ*, No. ii.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. i. 17.

statement before Agrippa, that at once he began his preaching first in that city.<sup>1</sup> But the point before us is the instinctive feeling with which he names Damascus. He has not stated above that it was there that he had been converted, and that it was thence he had gone to Arabia. With a mind full of the recollection, he simply says that he "returned to Damascus." Possibly he had told to the Galatians, when he was among them, the story of his Conversion. Indeed we can hardly doubt that he had done so. But this only makes what we find here to appear the more natural; and, just to add one thing which tends to rescue the narrative of the Acts at this point from any semblance of imitation, the visit to Arabia is not mentioned there at all, as it certainly would have been in an attempt to obtain credit by correspondence with the Epistle.

Its incidental and natural character.

Only specimens have been taken from a solid mass of evidence, which might be exhibited in many particulars. But enough has been written to show that, when travelling carefully through these four Epistles and looking well around us, we find paths diverging on this side and that, along which we might move without any interruption, so as to traverse the whole of the New Testament, and to perceive that it is a continuous region, with all the parts happily related to one another.

The relation and continuity of all parts of the New Testament.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix. 20 ; xxvi. 20.



The force  
of the  
argument.

As regards the topic on which we have been last engaged, the comparative examination of these four Epistles, on the one hand, and the history of the Acts on the other, coalesce into an argument, the force of which it is very difficult to resist. It is precisely the kind of evidence which tells very forcibly in a court of justice. Let us imagine ourselves in such a court, with four authentic letters, concerning which no doubt is entertained. The question is regarding the trustworthiness of a continuous narrative dealing with the same subjects, incidents, and persons. Is it not evident that such circumstances as those which have just been named, would weigh very powerfully with a jury, and would probably secure a favourable verdict? One very interesting fact in Paley's life is that he was always fond of observing circumstantial evidence. When he was a young man, he spent much of his time in attending trials, and showed the greatest eagerness and patience in watching the fate of prisoners; and all through life he displayed marked cleverness in weighing evidence, and a great love of that kind of pointed investigation which is required in the cross-examination of witnesses. We have the result in the *Horæ Paulinæ*, a book which is of infinite value, and which never can be obsolete.

One remark, which has been justly made



regarding that book, may be fairly claimed likewise on behalf of this unpretending Tract which must now draw to its end. Whatever evidential argument it contains, all other Christian evidence remains intact. It sometimes happens that a position in apologetics depends upon the securing of some other position first, and that when one part of the defensive ground is lost, other parts must be surrendered also. Not so here. Whatever confirmations of our faith are derived from prophecy, from miracle, from adaptation to the needs of man, from science, from collateral history, from actual success and human experience,—all these sources of conviction flow freely and unimpaired, whatever be the fate of the argument here set forth.

The independent character of the argument.

I have no desire to exaggerate the importance of this slight endeavour. The great edifice of Christian Evidence is complicated and majestic, and consists of many parts. What is here attempted is only a buttress. Yet a buttress may have its value as a helpful, though subordinate, part of a noble building, and may do something for the support of a structure which is deep and strong in its foundations, and bright with the radiance of heaven on its pinnacles above. Any strength that may be communicated in this way is communicated to the whole; and nothing is to be despised which may help in giving confidence in

The subordinate yet important place of the argument.

that “great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him—God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 2.

















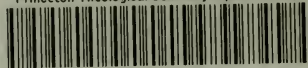






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